
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address: **1510 10th Street NW**
Landmark/District: **Shaw Historic District**

Meeting Date: **December 16, 2021**
H.P.A. Number: **#22-075**

- Agenda
 - Consent Calendar
 - Denial Calendar
 - Permit Review
 - Alteration
 - New Construction
 - Demolition
 - Subdivision
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The applicant, owner Viswanath Gundavarapu, seeks concept design review for a rear addition of two -stories plus roof deck at 1510 10th Street NW, a two-story rowhouse which contributes to the character of the Shaw Historic District. Plans were prepared by MG Construction LLC.

Property Description and Context

The house is in the northwest corner of the historic district, just below Rhode Island Avenue and across from the open space of Seaton Elementary School. Based on land and tax records the house was built between 1858 and 1874 and exhibits historic architectural forms typical of a mid-19th century vernacular house, including a simple flat elevation of widely spaced hung windows and a standing-seam side-gable roof. The front steps are not original and the window sizes may have been reduced or relocation from their original locations.

Proposal

The applicant proposes to retain the front facade, roof and structural components of the house and remove the rear wall to accommodate a new two-story 20-foot deep rear addition. The addition would be clad in clapboard siding. A roof deck accessed by an open frame stair would occupy the flat roof of the addition and sit just behind the historic gable roof. The front façade would be treated minimally as indicated on the drawings with notes that existing conditions and materials are to be retained. The area of exception is where the front entrance stairs will be replaced with new metal stairs dimensioned to accommodate a new basement entrance underneath.

Evaluation

The permit drawings submitted for review are sufficient to describe a rear addition conceptually compatible with the historic district. This is primarily established by substantially retaining the structure of the historic house and treating its simple, but contributing, front façade features with a light touch. The size and form of the rear addition is acceptable and, by projecting past the wing about six feet, will match the scale and massing of the other rear additions and wings on the interior of this square. However, the height of the addition is shown as taller than the eaves of the rear roof which would result in a drainage problem by creating a dam at the base of the sloped roof. The height of the addition should be lowered so that it is not taller than the historic roof and does not block the natural drainage of the gable roof. The other questionable item is the roof deck and stairs which will dominate the rear composition of the house. While large in proportion to the addition itself, it is not incompatible because it will not produce any visibility over the front of the house, and its utilitarian nature is not out of place in an alley context.

The new basement entrance planned for under the new front entrance stairs largely complies with the Board's guidelines by running straight run stairs parallel to the house.¹ On the whole, the dimensions and condition of public space on this block would not suffer from new basement stairs which in fact give an opportunity to remove the concreted front yard and replace it with landscaping that is compatible with the historic district. Other front façade elements on the permit drawings can be corrected by Staff by annotating the drawings and requiring that the front masonry openings not be cased and that the front door and transom will have a four-panel and single-lite sash configuration.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept of adding a two-story rear addition and roof deck compatible with the character of the historic district on the condition that if be lower than the historic gable roof, its load-bearing walls and floor/roof framing systems be substantially retained as shown, and that final approval be delegated to Staff.

Staff contact: Brendan Meyer

¹ *Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows*, 2011, p. 7-8,